

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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R 171510Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7247
INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMCONSUL KADUNA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 3450

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PDEV, NI
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ZIK IN '79?

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.

1. ACCORDING TO A MARCH 17 PUNCH ARTICLE BY POLITICAL EDITOR
NDUKA ONUM, NIGERIA'S FIRST PRESIDENT, DR. AZIKIWE, MAY BE

INTERESTED IN RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT NEXT YEAR UNDER THE NEW
CIVILIAN CONSTITUTION.

2. ONUM CLAIMS THAT AZIKIWE HAS BEEN MEETING WITH POLITICAL
LEADERS FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AT HIS RESIDENCE IN
ONITSHA AND AT HIS COUNTRY HOME IN ONUIYI, NSUKKA. HE ADDS THAT
ONLY ESTABLISHED FIGURES SUCH AS AZIKIWE AND CHIEF AWOLOWO HAVE
THE PUBLIC IMAGES TO GAIN NATIONWIDE SUPPORT IN AN ELECTION.

END UNCLASSIFIED.

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3. COMMENT: AZIKIWE IS 73 YEARS OLD AND HAS LIVED A ROBUST LIFE,
BOTH POLITICALLY AND PERSONALLY. HOWEVER, IN A CONVERSATION LAST
YEAR WITH THE AMBASSADOR, FORMER NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON,
JOHN GARBA SAID THAT AZIKIWE WAS BETTER PRESERVED THAN THE MORE
SEDATE LIVING AWOLOWO. NEVERTHELESS, AN AZIKIWE CANDIDACY WOULD
BE IN CONTRADICTION TO HIS EARLIER STATEMENT THAT THE OLDER POLI-

TICAL LEADERS SHOULD STEP ASIDE IN FAVOR OF YOUNGER POLITICIANS
IN 1979. AZIKIWE WAS CRITICIZED AT THE TIME FOR HIS REMARKS BY
AWOLOWO. END COMMENT.

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EASUM

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